

Paper title: **A Comparative Study of Numeral phrase structure
between Vietnamese and Thai**

Sub-field: Linguistics

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A Comparative Study of Numeral phrase structure between Vietnamese and Thai

Vietnamese and Thai are isolated language which morphemes, words and phrase are ordered in a sentence as the same grammar. They are not only in the same sentence pattern but also noun phrase pattern, especially the pattern of numeral phrase. Classifier and unit of measurement play an important role of Vietnamese and Thai numeral phrase structure. They are placed in order to count a number of its head noun. Although members Vietnamese and Thai numeral phrase structure are in the same of category but these members are arranged in the different position.

The result of comparison shows that the difference of Vietnamese and Thai numeral phrase structure is on the position of head noun. Head noun of Vietnamese numeral phrase is placed after a classifier or a unit of measurement, but head noun of Thai numeral phrase is placed before a classifier or a unit of measurement.

There is only one pattern of Vietnamese numeral phrase structure, that is:

A word refer to a whole thing	Number	Emphasis word	Classifier/word of measurement	Head noun	Noun modifier
(1) tɔt ⁴⁵ ka ⁴²³	nuɔŋ ³¹⁻³⁵	kaj ³⁵	cuon ⁴⁵	sæk ⁴⁵	ʔɔj ⁴⁵
(2) -	ba ⁴⁴	-	ki ⁴⁴ lô ⁴⁴	cam ⁴⁴	-

Ex:

1. tɔt⁴⁵ ka⁴²³ nuɔŋ³¹⁻³⁵ kaj³⁵ cuon⁴⁵ sæk⁴⁵ ʔɔj⁴⁵ ‘All those books’
 2. ba⁴⁴ ki⁴⁴ lô⁴⁴ cam⁴⁴ ‘Three kilos of orange’

But they are two patterns of Thai numeral phrase structure, they are:

Pattern A:

Head noun	Noun modifier	A word refer to a whole thing	Number	Classifier/word of measurement	Demonstrative
(3) k ^h on ³³ khai ³⁵⁴	nak ³²	t ^h əŋ ³⁵⁴	səŋ ³²³	k ^h on ³³	nan ³⁵⁴
(4) som ³⁵⁴	-	-	sam ³²³	ki ³² lo ³³	-

Ex:

3. k^hon³³ k^hai³⁵⁴ nak³² t^həŋ³⁵⁴ səŋ³²³ k^hon³³ nan³⁵⁴ ‘Those serious patients’
 4. som³⁵⁴ sam³²³ ki³² lo³³ ‘Three kilos of orange’

Pattern B:

Head noun	Noun modifier	Classifier/word of measurement	Number
(5) kəŋ ³³	kai ³²	t ^h uay ³⁵⁴	nuɔŋ ³²
(6) -	-	ki ³² lo ³³	diew ³³

Ex:

5. kəŋ³³ kai³² t^huay³⁵⁴ nuɔŋ³² ‘A bowl of chicken soup’
 6. ki³² lo³³ diew³³ ‘One kilo’

As I mention above, Vietnamese and Thai numeral phrase structure are composed of the same category members, but their *head noun* are placed in the different position. The difference will be easily realized if there are only three members in these numeral phrase structures (head noun, number, classifier or unit of measurement), head noun of Vietnamese numeral phrase is placed after classifier or unit of measurement: ‘number + classifier / unit of measurement + *head noun*’ but head noun of Thai numeral phrase is placed before number and then classifier or unit of measurement: ‘*head noun* + number + classifier / unit of measurement’ as in Ex. 1-2 and 3-4. Further more if the *number* of Thai numeral phrase structure is a word which means “one”, this word can be switched and placed after classifier or unit of measurement of the phrase as in Ex. 5-6.

The difference of the structure of Vietnam and Thai numeral phrase can induce misunderstanding on Vietnamese learners who study Thai or vice versa. It is quite necessary to indicate those differences clearly for the learners.

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